tip to the bill, which even in the skin can still be seen to extend across the full width of the tip and slightly up the sides, whereas in the Ferruginous Duck, only the nail is black. The iris is also intermediate between the parent species, that of the Pochard being red and the Ferruginous Duck white.

It is interesting that this appears to be the first example of this hybrid to have been found in India. Both species have overlapping breeding ranges to the north of the subcontinent in the U.S.S.R. In areas where the Ferruginous Duck is common, this hybrid is likely to be overlooked, in view of the similarities in the field, whereas in the British Isles, where the Ferruginous Duck is rare and the intensity of bird watching much greater, this hybrid has been observed much more frequently. Four specimens and four field identifications were listed up to 1965 by Gillham, Harrison and Harrison, all from southern England.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once more, we are most grateful to Mr. J. C. Daniel for the loan of the Indian hybrid skin. We are also much indebted to Dr. Pamela Harrison for the photographs of the specimen.

HARRISON ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM,
SEVENOAKS, KENT,
ENGLAND,
November 24, 1971.

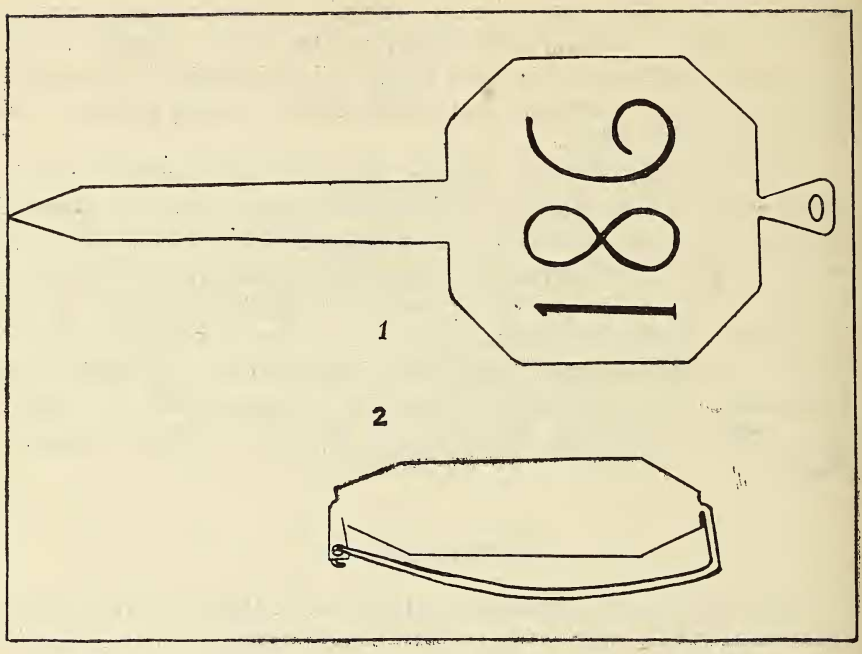
JAMES HARRISON
JEFFERY HARRISON

6. A NEW WING TAG FOR MARKING VULTURES

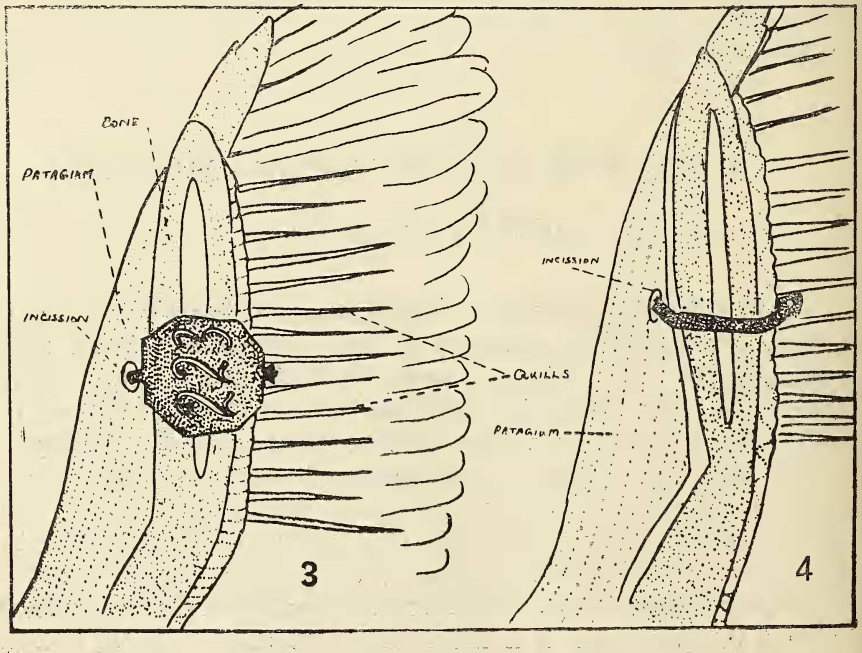
(*With four text-figures*)

While studying the ecology and behaviour of vultures in Gir Forest, Gujarat, I have found it necessary to band vultures to estimate their population by the marking-recapture method, and to study their movement. Since conventional tags and bands are either too small to read easily in the field or are less durable, this wing tag was developed.

The wing tag is a 90 mm broad hexagonal aluminium plate with a loop on one side which tapers at the tip and fits into a slot in an extension of the opposite side. The tag is placed on the bird's wing by passing the loop through a slit made in the patagium skin folds above the carpometacarpus. To avoid the metal extension at the bottom from pressing the quills apart it is narrowed at the base. The tag is kept



Text-figures 1 & 2. *Above* : Tag before banding. *Below* : Shape of the tag after banding : side view.



Text-figures 3 & 4. The tag *in situ*.
Left: dorsal view; right: ventral view.

loose and it does not press against the muscles. The tag is painted bright yellow on the outer surface. The thickness of the aluminium plate is 18 gauge.

Before trying out the tag on wild vultures it was fitted on two captive adult whitebacked vultures *Gyps bengalensis* on 20 December 1970. Within two days the wound healed and the birds did not appear to be affected by the tag. The birds did not attempt to pull the tags off. After a month one of these birds died for reasons other than the tag, while the second bird was released four months later with the tag.

Twelve more whitebacked vultures were tagged from 10th June to 7th November 1971. One of the birds tagged in June with tag No. 105 was resighted about eight kilometres away from the marking site on 11 December 1971 with no visible ill effect, at a carcass with many unbanded vultures. This same bird was again sighted around the same area at a lion kill with other vultures including another tagged bird whose number could not be read due to distance. One of the birds tagged in June was also reported to be feeding off a carcass with other vultures about 30 km from the marking site in mid-August, 1971. The peasant who saw this bird could not read Arabic numerals.

The advantages of the tag are:

1. The tag is big enough to hold big numbers or codes to be read in the field with the least difficulty.
2. It is very light for these huge birds, and does not affect the flight.
3. The metal does not affect the body tissue of the bird.
4. The tag is durable, and the numbers are expected to last for several years.
5. This tag might effectively replace the conventional leg bands for vultures and other large birds with similar flight patterns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mrs. Almitra Patel, Gir Project Officer, took trouble to get the tags made according to the design I provided. The Bombay Natural History Society has given me opportunity to do the present study through the Gir Project.

B.N.H.S. GIR PROJECT,
SASAN GIR,
GUJRAT, ROBERT B. GRUBH
INDIA,
February 15, 1972.